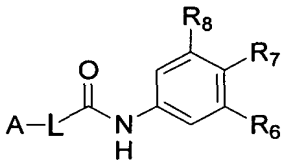
What is claimed is:

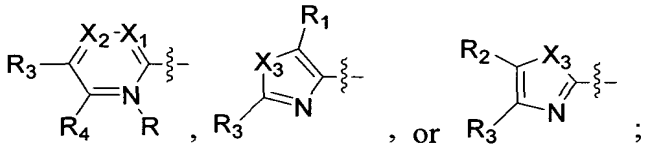
1. A compound of formula (I)



(I),

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof, wherein

A is



;

X_1 is N or CR_1;

X_2 is N or CR_2;

X_3 is O or N;

R is absent or O;

R_1 is hydrogen, lower alkoxy, lower alkenyl, lower alkyl, lower alkylthio, lower alkynyl, lower haloalkoxy, lower haloalkyl, lower haloalkylthio, halogen, hydroxy, mercapto, nitro, or $-NR_AR_B$;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are independently hydrogen or halogen;

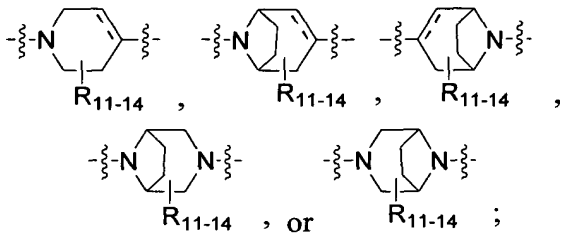
R_7 is hydrogen, alkenyl, alkoxy, alkoxycarbonyl, alkoxysulfonyl, alkyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkylsulfonyl, alkylthio, alkynyl, aryl, arylalkyl, aryloxy, arylthio, cycloalkyl, cycloalkylalkyl, cycloalkyloxy, cycloalkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkylsulfonyl, haloalkylthio, halogen, heteroaryl, heteroarylalkyl, heteroaryloxy, heteroarylthio, heterocycle, heterocyclealkyl, hydroxy, hydroxyalkyl, $-NR_CR_D$, (NR_AR_B)carbonyl, or (NR_AR_B)sulfonyl;

R_6 and R_8 are independently hydrogen, lower alkenyl, lower alkoxy, lower alkyl, lower alkylthio, lower alkynyl, lower haloalkoxy, lower haloalkyl, lower haloalkylthio, halogen, hydroxy, mercapto, or $-NR_AR_B$;

R_A and R_B are independently hydrogen or alkyl;

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen, alkenyl, alkoxycarbonyl, alkyl, alkylcarbonyl, alkynyl, or (NR_AR_B)carbonyl;

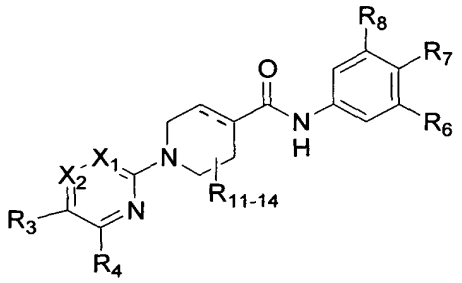
L is



--- is absent or a single bond; and

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are independently hydrogen, alkoxy, alkyl, or hydroxy.

2. The compound according to claim 1 of formula (II)



(II),

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof.

3. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is a single bond;

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is alkoxy, alkyl, alkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkylsulfonyl, haloalkylthio, halogen, or $-NR_CR_D$;

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen; and

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen or alkyl.

4. The compound according to claim 3 that is

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-3'-chloro-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-methylphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-methoxyphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-fluorophenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

N-(4-bromophenyl)-3'-chloro-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(trifluoromethoxy)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-ethylphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-isopropylphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(4-propoxyphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(methylthio)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-(3-fluoro-4-methylphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(dimethylamino)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(diethylamino)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-3'-(trifluoromethyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

N-(4-chlorophenyl)-3'-(trifluoromethyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

N-[4-(trifluoromethoxy)phenyl]-3'-(trifluoromethyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-(trifluoromethyl)-N-{4-[(trifluoromethyl)thio]phenyl}-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-(trifluoromethyl)-N-{4-[(trifluoromethyl)sulfonyl]phenyl}-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide; or

N-(3-fluoro-4-methylphenyl)-3'-(trifluoromethyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide.

5. The compound according to claim 3 that is 3'-chloro-N-(4-chlorophenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide.

6. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is a single bond;

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is aryl or aryloxy; and

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen.

7. The compound according to claim 6 that is

3'-chloro-N-(4-phenoxyphenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

or

N-1,1'-biphenyl-4-yl-3'-chloro-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide.

8. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is a single bond;

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is heterocycle; and

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen.

9. The compound according to claim 8 that is

3'-chloro-N-[4-(1-piperidinyl)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

3'-chloro-N-[4-(4-morpholinyl)phenyl]-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide; or

N-[4-(1-azepanyl)phenyl]-3'-chloro-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide.

10. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is a single bond;

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_6 is lower alkyl, lower haloalkyl, or halogen; and

R_7, R_8, R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen.

11. The compound according to claim 10 that is

N-(3-tert-butylphenyl)-3'-chloro-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide;

or

3'-chloro-N-(3-fluorophenyl)-3,6-dihydro-2H-1,2'-bipyridine-4-carboxamide.

12. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is absent;

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is alkoxy, alkyl, alkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, halogen, or $-NR_CR_D$;

R_{11} is hydrogen or hydroxy;

R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen; and

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen or alkyl.

13. The compound according to claim 12 that is

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-1-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-(cis)-3-hydroxy-4-piperidinecarboxamide;

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-1-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-(trans)-3-hydroxy-4-piperidinecarboxamide; or

1-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-4-hydroxy-N-[4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-4-piperidinecarboxamide.

14. The compound according to claim 2 wherein

--- is a single bond;

X_1 is N;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is alkoxy, alkyl, alkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkylsulfonyl, haloalkylthio, halogen, or $-NR_CR_D$;

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen; and

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen or alkyl.

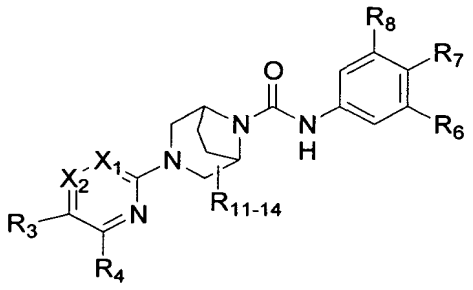
15. The compound according to claim 12 that is

N-(4-chlorophenyl)-1-pyrimidin-2-yl-1,2,3,6-tetrahydropyridine-4-carboxamide;

1-pyrimidin-2-yl-N-{4-[(trifluoromethyl)thio]phenyl}-1,2,3,6-tetrahydropyridine-4-carboxamide; or

1-pyrimidin-2-yl-N-{4-[(trifluoromethyl)sulfonyl]phenyl}-1,2,3,6-tetrahydropyridine-4-carboxamide.

16. The compound according to claim 1 of formula (III)



(III),

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof.

17. The compound according to claim 16 wherein

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is alkoxy, alkyl, alkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkylthio, halogen, or $-NR_CR_D$;

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen; and

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen or alkyl.

18. The compound according to claim 17 that is

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-(3,4-dichlorophenyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-[4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-(4-fluorophenyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

N-(4-chlorophenyl)-3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

N-(4-bromophenyl)-3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-(4-iodophenyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

N-(4-butylphenyl)-3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide;

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-(4-isopropylphenyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide; or

3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-{4-[(trifluoromethyl)thio]phenyl}-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide.

19. The compound according to claim 16 wherein

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower haloalkyl or halogen;

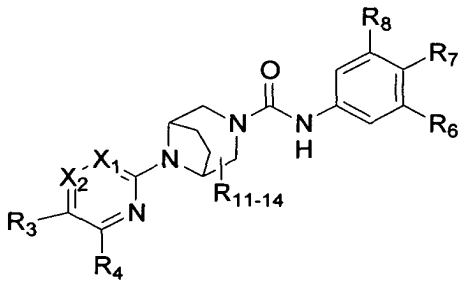
R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_6 is lower alkyl, lower haloalkyl, or halogen; and

R_7, R_8, R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen.

20. The compound according to claim 19 that is 3-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-[3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-8-carboxamide.

21. The compound according to claim 1 of formula (IV)



(IV),

or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt or prodrug thereof.

22. The compound according to claim 21 wherein

X_1 is CR_1;

X_2 is CR_2;

R_1 is lower alkyl or halogen;

R_2, R_3, and R_4 are hydrogen;

R_7 is alkoxy, alkyl, alkylthio, haloalkoxy, haloalkyl, haloalkylthio, halogen, or $-NR_CR_D$;

R_{11}, R_{12}, R_{13}, and R_{14} are hydrogen; and

R_C and R_D are independently hydrogen or alkyl.

23. The compound according to claim 22 that is

N-(4-tert-butylphenyl)-8-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-3-carboxamide; or

8-(3-chloro-2-pyridinyl)-N-[4-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-3,8-diazabicyclo[3.2.1]octane-3-carboxamide.

24. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I-IV) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.

25. A method of treating pain in a mammal, comprising administering a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of formula (I-IV) or a pharmaceutically acceptable salt thereof.